film art

MAN RAY v. S J. WOODS
FRITZ ARNO WAGNER
OSWELL BLAKESTON
LOTTE REINIGER
BASIL WRIGHT
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VOL. III
No. 8

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film art

an independent quarterly devoted to the serious film

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IRENE NICHOLSON JOHN C. MOORE
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SECOND QUARTER 1936

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EDITORIAL

"FILM ART is strongly stimulating to all those who have the wish to create cinema art. I wish you every success....." FRITZ ARNO WAGNER.

Progress and success are synonymous. FILM ART No. 7 merited its well-earned success, not because it was perfect, but because it was an improvement on all previous issues. It contained several new features which met with the approval of readers and critics alike, and the demand was so great that we were sold out one month after publication. Our thanks go to our contributors Man Ray, Andrew Buchanan, S John Woods and Dr. Werner Brandes who have made this possible. We shall endeavour to maintain the same high level and to pursue the same progressive policy in the future.

In this number we have the pleasure to submit to our readers an article by Fritz Arno Wagner, the noted German cameraman, who makes one of his rare appearances in British journalism. Mr. Wagner needs no introduction to our readers, since we published an interview with him in our No. 4. In this issue he discusses, in a provocative article, the future of the cinema, in particular the sound film. Mr. Wagner has also been good enough to give us an introduction to Messrs. Herlth and Röhrig, the two well-known German film architects of such films as *Faust, The Last Laugh, Flüchtlinge* and *Amphitryon*. Like those two indominable spirits of the American cinema, Hecht and McArthur, these two Germans have also decided to break away from their old profession—in which they held leading places—and try their hand at film producing. An article from their pen will shortly appear FILM ART, with their own original illustrations.

From the many letters we have received it would appear that our readers take a great interest in the possibilities of the *Abstract* and *Surrealist* film. In our last number Man Ray said: "There is no future for the Abstract film", while S John Woods, in his article *Abstract Film* expounded the theories of his movement. As an independent and unbiassed publication we naturally cannot take sides, but as a matter of interest we have asked Fritz Arno Wagner his opinion as to the future of these separate sections of the cinema.

To satisfy those who are interested, we have requested John Piper, the well-known artist, to carry out a series of progressive drawings in colour, showing the relationship between the film and certain kind of abstract art painting, with explanatory text by S John Woods. The use of colour in the illustrations is certain to be of great advantage, for it is in the colour film that abstract work has played and will play its most important part.

In order not to disappoint the opposition, however, we have

persuaded some of the leading Surrealist exponents such as Bunuel, Andre Breton and Paul Eluard, to state their views in the near future.

Irene Nicholson writes that *shooting* on the film being made by her and Bryan Montagu in Trinadad has not yet begun. She sends us some *stills* taken by her while making preliminary tests. By courtesy of the *Trinidad Guardian*, the sponsors of the film, we publish one on page 19.

A very interesting study of sex in the film, *Psychopathia Cinema Sexualis*, by Herman G. Weinberg, one of the most outspoken of American critics, has just come to hand, and we shall be happy to publish this article in No. 9.

We are grateful to those subscribers who have introduced FILM ART to their friends, especially to our readers in the U.S.A. who have done so much for us in this connection.

• • •

THE PASSING OF THE LANTERN SLIDE

Just as the " talkie " superseded the " silent " film for popular entertainment, so is the Stop-Film replacing the slide for lectures and propaganda work. Those who have not seen a Stop-Film demonstration fail to appreciate the advance which has been made in lantern exhibition. A Stop-Film reel consists of a number of pictures printed on a strip of standard 35mm safety film. Heavy and bulky slides are replaced by small reels of film pictures, thus eliminating all risks of breakage, and, incidentally, overcoming storage problems.

Sufficient pictures for an hour's lecture can be conveniently carried in the waistcoat pocket. Many thousands of pictures can be easily stored in a small drawer. There is no risk of getting the pictures out of order (as frequently occurs when slides are used), because they are printed on the reel in order of sequence, and each subject is confined to one reel of films. The films, being non-inflamable, permit adequate time for oral explanations; and the base of the films is practically everlasting. The fact that the pictures cannot get out of sequence on a Stop-Film, or that one picture cannot very well get broken, is a triumph in lantern exhibition. A reel of 100 pictures costs 1½d. for postage, and can be enclosed in an ordinary envelope. Stop-Films can be made from any subject, such as maps, pictures, photographs, typescript, etc. at very small cost. Because of the economic and other advantages which the Stop-Film possesses over the old lantern slide, its success would seem to be assured.

HECTOR C. MARSHALL.

I BELIEVE IN THE SOUND FILM

FRITZ ARNO WAGNER

I believe in the Talking Film because speech does not necessarily prevent a film from becoming a work of art, once the question of material has been settled in principle. Speech will then enhance the film, provided that the dynamic quality of the film to-day, namely Rhythm, whether applied to Sound or Scene, is fulfilled, and the visual and audible components create a harmonious whole. In all other works of art Form is always the principal element, content being shamefully overshadowed. In the Talking Film alone Content is paramount. The trouble is that the Talking Film of to-day has too little Form; it reminds one greatly of genre-painting, which may be read and interpreted in a thousand different ways. The basis of filmic representation remains the Picture, and the Spoken Word and Song must, of necessity, be subordinated to its claims. They must be applied only with the greatest restraint, and then only for their poetic quality. If speech be essential, the characters should speak simply and naturally (incidentally this is sometimes achieved extremely well in American films), otherwise the picture should be self-explanatory. The piling-up of Dialogue and the way Producers have of ignoring the pure filmic means of expression, are to blame for the fact that, for the time being, the Film has lost its form.

As to Material: This must be a far-reaching theme, coupled with an all embracing idea, and the outcome of a visualised picture which can only be expressed in filmic form. Even so it takes all the means the Film has at its disposal to express really worthwhile ideas. It is regrettable that this is so little realised, for the dynamic style of expression of the Film makes it better suited to modern times than is the Theatre. It should therefore be quite possible to make of Talking Films harmonious works of art, in which, by careful blending of Scene and Sound, the picture speaks for itself in the finest continuity. Never should the spoken word alone carry the film: that is the business of the theatre. To have its greatest effect, anything that grips you or carries you away in a good film should emanate not from the spoken word, but always from the picture.

The demand for pure film art seemed to be almost fulfilled in *Caligari,* for which painters are chiefly responsible; it was not only visual film, but also dynamically animated by its contents. The Russians, who created *Potemkin,* were also masters of expression by pictures, and this classic is cited by Dr. Goebbels as an example of pure cinema art.* Already at that time the film seemed to have

* See S. M. Eisenstein's open letter to Dr. Goebbels in FILM ART No. 5 and Irene Nicholson's reply in No. 6. — ED.

FRITZ ARNO WAGNER, who is a contributor to this number, was responsible for the camera work of the following films:

Der Müde Tod	Fritz Lang
Spione	Fritz Lang
"M"	Fritz Lang
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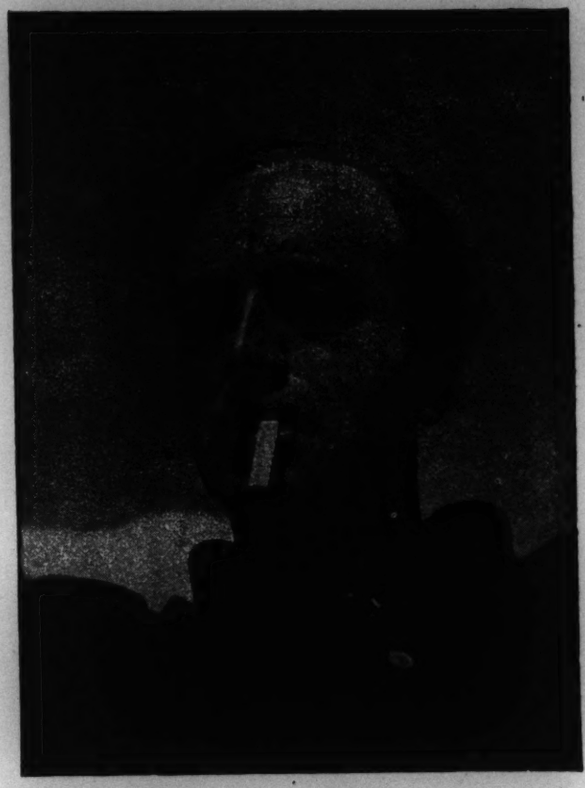

"FILM PRODUCTION"

By **ADRIAN BRUNEL** *(above)*

With an Introduction by ALEXANDER KORDA

"With his first book, *Filmcraft*, Mr. Brunel performed a service to film production; it is still the most authoratitive and lucid exposition of cinematic art, and it has the additional merit of being witty. In his new work he takes the student further and with the same gentle and happy encouragement. His advice is always stimulating and practical.

"At a time when Mr. Brunel was making a series of satirical films, he was described as the 'Leacock of the Screen.' Although he has apparently abandoned that role, the description seems prophetic; Stephen Leacock is a Professor of McGill University and Adrian Brunel is rapidly qualifying for a Chair of Cinematography."

CONTENTS : TECHNIQUE, MOVEMENT & SOUND, INSPIRATION, ORIGINALITY, ACTING, COST, ADVENTURING, CRUISING, REFLECTORS, ART DIRECTION, AMBITION, TREATMENT, THE RIGHT ANGLE, CLOTHES, SET ECONOMY, THE ASSOCIATE PRODUCER, ASSISTANT DIRECTION, CASTING, THE CONTINUITY GIRL, DIALOGUE, EDITING, HAIRDRESSSING FOR THE SCREEN, MAKE-UP, SCREEN TREATMENT, THIS SOUND BUSINESS, CHRISTIAN NAMES.

SPECIALIST APPENDICES by LAWRENCE P. WILLIAMS, LEIGH AMAN, S. CHANDOS BALCON, HAROLD HUTH, DAN BIRT, GERALD ELLIOTT, MEG BENNETT, BIDDY CHRYSTAL, TEDDIE EDWARDS, JOHN PADDY CARSTAIRS, A. W. WATKINS.

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found a Form: The Pictorial Form. It is true that Sound temporarily put an end to this development, and set it back ; even so why should we not go back to that stage and include Sound in this Form we have found, thus making the Film still more effective, still nearer to life? Sound is always more tolerable than boring sub-titles which interrupt, if they do not completely destroy, the pictorial continuity. In 1922 Arthur Robison, Albin Grau and I created *Warning Shadows*, a film without sub-titles, in order to avoid this dilemma. However, it only found response from film aesthetes; making no impression on the general public.*

We slip further and further into the greatest evil of the Talking Film, namely because of the introduction of speech, putting the actor too much in the limelight, whilst everything filmic around and behind him becomes of secondary importance. He has become the Artist of the Film. All others associated in its creation, however great their genius, remain technicians. Consequently the only Art the general public sees in the film is that connected with the actor, and so long as we lay this emphasis on him, the Talking Film will make no further development. Thus I have answered your question as to whether the Film, in its present form, has a future. The general public sees only the hero, the heroine, and the other more or less stereotyped characters.

Actually there has never been a completely silent film. Use was always made of musical emphasis, and in the end this was employed in too obtrusive a form. Nor must it be forgotten that certain pure dialogue films were among the greatest successes: *It Happened One Night* (Direction Frank Capra) and *Pygmalion* (Direction Erich Engels); it is to be hoped that they will remain exceptions!

As to the film critic: he is a necessity. In all other arts, *art* was there first; then came the Maecenas, the Church, the State, to claim the artist, and they had time to let a piece of work mature and to excersise self-criticism until their work had reached perfection. Later Industry (Printing etc.) entered into some arts. In the case of the Film, however, there was an exploiting industry almost immediately after the appearance of what was at first a very imperfect technical invention. When profits remained too small and better business prospects were sensed if the Film were associated with other arts, the artist was drawn in, the film artist made and a large scale Film Industry established. The film artist, drawn into a business organised to the smallest detail, lacked time for serious self criticism, which is a matter of course in every other field of art. Urged by the desire for profit, rushed from one film into another, he missed—with few exceptions (Chaplin, etc.)—the right road to

* This film, at the time of its production, was a remarkable achievement of pure psychological direction. Every filmic property for the expression of mood, for the creation of atmosphere, that was known at the time, was used with imagination and intelligence. — Ed.

reach his goal—to create an art of the film. Only the serious film critic can help to show the producer the road which leads to perfect form and assist him in creating a filmic-aesthetic model, which shall fix and enlarge recognised principles and fruitfully influence the future, so that one day, real film art may be created. Real art has ever been for a small circle of people, and I therefore want to add the following with regard to the abstract and surrealist film: These film forms will never find a great public, although it is not impossible that a few will have success. They exist rather in order to prove laws and their effect, so that they may, one day, be applied to all kind of films.

In Germany, during the last few years, the average level of the entertainment film has considerably improved as a result of State influence. There has been no lack of endeavour to create the artistic talking film. Wysbar's *Fährmann Maria* contains pictorially and from the point of view of sound some extremely successful moments, but it is not perfection.

I think the Documentary Film will achieve its object sooner than the Entertainment Film; a fine start in this field has already been made. The world produces too many films; one third of them of the best quality and running longer, would suffice for the market, and this would give us more time to think over our work and to create progressively good film.

Berlin : Spring 1936.

Translated from the German by A. L. H. MOORE *and* S. P. LARCOMBE.

• • •

THE FUTURE OF DOCUMENTARY

BASIL WRIGHT, M.A.*

The recent successes of Documentary Films in the ordinary cinemas have made a great difference in the approach to the subject of the sponsor, the financier and the producer. There is a growing feeling that there is something in the documentary racket after all. The development of organisations such as Strand Films and Associated Realist Film Producers, coordinating all the directors of Documentary Films under one banner, is an important step forward. It ensures that the quality of Documentary Films, in this country at any rate, will keep to reasonably high level.

For the future there are two problems. First—what will be

* Basil Wright, who is acclaimed by many as one of the most promising young directors of the G.P.O.Film Unit, has the following films to his credit: *O'er Hill and Dale* (1931), *The Country Comes to Town* (1931), *Windmill in Barbados* (1933), *Cargo from Jamaica* (1933) and *The Song of Ceylon* (1934), while his latest production *Night Mail* is now being shown with great success throughout this country.

the main lines of production? Second—where exactly is Documentary going to find its permanent public?

Production.

The primary interest of the true Documentary Director is sociological. But the finance for a sociological subject is in general only to be found from either a Government Department or a big Corporation, which have begun to realise the value of " Public Relations " as opposed to direct advertisement or propaganda. Indeed, even in smaller firms which cannot claim to be public service corporations. the same sociological opportunities may be found.

This means that the plan of a Documentary tends to have a double edge. On the side of the sponsors, the main interest is naturally how far public opinion can be interested (however indirectly). On the side of the director, the interest is both that of the sociological problem and that of making the best film expression possible out of the subject in hand (in ideal cases these two aspects will coincide).

The influence on technique of this situation may be defined as follows: — There is in nature bound to be a split in the fundamental approach to the Documentary Film. Not merely differences of subjects, but differences of psychological approach are bound to enter in. Thus we find the Documentary of direct reporting (e.g. *Housing Problems* (Elton), *Stand by for Work* (Anstey); the expressionist Documentary (expressionist in the best sense) as exemplified by *Shipyard* and *Face of Britain* (Rotha); the dialetic-instructional *The Mine* (Holmes) and the dialetic-lyric (as in certain G.P.O. films). The interesting point is that all these aspects can exist comfortably under one banner and in one unquarrelsome group.

In any case the classifications indicated above (the pure interest and scientific film being deliberately omitted) are in a way a grand guarantee to potential sponsors, not merely of the integrity, but also of the efficiency (if necessary, in box office terms) of the purposed production.

Distribution.

But there still remains the problem of the audience. For it should not be supposed that any and every Documentary is a box-office proposition. It would indeed be regrettable if that were so ; Documentary has other fish to fry.

There will always be a public for Documentaries of the type of *Shipyard, Weather Forecast* and *Night Mail*—a public, that is, who will enjoy such films as part of their evening's programme.

But what must not be forgotten is that there is a growing public represented by uplift societies, film groups, study circles, adult education schools, universities and last but not least the schools, whether local council, grammar or public. The value of

this audience cannot be underestimated. At the moment Documentary is sowing in this field at least five million people a year. This figure may be expected to increase with considerable rapidity. Note to that many of the films seen by this audience are sponsored by commercial firms or public corporations.

In fact, we are reaching a point in which the teaching of civics and the go-getting interests of big concerns coincide. This means that Documentary can do itself service and serve the state (however constituted) at the same time.

With the increasing importance of the use of film to the B.B.C., now intensified by the imminence of practical television, the fields indicated above seem susceptible to an infinite expansion. For while it seems improbable that existing film-technique will be suitable for television purposes, it is equally certain that sooner or later television will be compelled to use the material of film, and especially of Documentary Film, to develop the form of expression most necessary to its artistic and sociological existence.

• • •

MOVING SILHOUETTES

LOTTE REINIGER

Film is motion. The great sensation of the early films was the fact that photographs could be seen moving on the screen. It seemed to be a wonder and well I can remember my excitement being taken to a picture for the first time to notice that the people on the screen were really moving.

In those early days a *chasse* or a pursuit was always the action, and the audience loved to see jumping horses, speeding carriages and rushing trains. There was usually a small plot, very simply acted, to give a reason for the hunt. The audience only became film conscious when the chase started. Something new was born, never seen before, *the film,* an independent form of expression, borrowing neither from the novel, the theatre or painting—just pure and simple motion on the screen.

A world of experimental variety was thrown open; but by exploitation of the technical resources and the artistic possibilities of this new medium, the film developed to such an extent that it now looks back ungratefully and rather with scorn on the good old days—the basis of its glory. I regard this as rather unjust.

However, such are the penalties of evolution. Artists and commercial people constantly try—sometimes working together, but more often opposing each other—to discover new means to bring fresh life and further development to this new art. In this

big army which is crusading after new land for the screen, the silhouette films I happen to make only play a very modest part. But at the same time this branch also deserves a certain amount of interest, being part of the "-trickfilm-salvation-army" that creates motion, not by photographing natural movement and mounting it, but by artificial means.

The genius of Disney and his followers has made the audience love this kind of fake motion, and by now it has acquired a special place in the development of the cinema.

In the silhouette film, instead of the creator playing with drawings, the marionettes play before the camera. These marionettes are not moved by strings or sticks, but constructed with as many limbs as possible. They are laid flat on a glass table; thus the light from underneath does not show the joints when the camera looks down on them to take the picture, frame by frame. When the camera is at rest the figures can be touched and moved into the next position for a further shot to be taken. And so *ad infinitum*.

I have always been fascinated by the problems of artificial movement in films, and since I became mixed up in this unfortunate business—which is a long time ago now*—this medium has never failed to keep me interested. Of course I like to experiment with different variations of abstract movement for background, lighting effects, etc. But the real sensation for me has always been—and will always be — the discovery of various possibilities of screen rhythm which, to my experience, is the most essential part of film art. For here rules are to be found that have nothing to do with other arts and essentially belong to the screen, and the screen alone.

All this business of discovery and experiment was much simpler in the silent days. Filming, for one, was less expensive then and the artist could go about his own ways more easily. Also the screen's genuine rhythm spoke more for itself.

In the present stage of sound film production, where one has to consider the things that are heard as well as the things that are seen, sound illustration has become a reliable guide. The musical score has increased its importance, and one can always be certain now to have the same musical value, whether performed in a small or a large film theatre. The creator of trick-film movement can be compared with the choreographer of the ballet—only he has not the space of the stage, but the more flat conditions of the screen to consider.

The ideal state for artists like us would be where we could make a film as we like, and add the musical score afterwards. This process, however, would increase the cost of the film considerably, and at the moment there is not sufficient money in these *shorts*—at least not in Europe. It is therefore wiser, from an economic

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* One of the first films made by Lotte Reiniger was *The Adventures of Prince Achmed*. It was directed by her husband Karl Koch, Magic and Scenery being by Walter Ruttman. — Ed.

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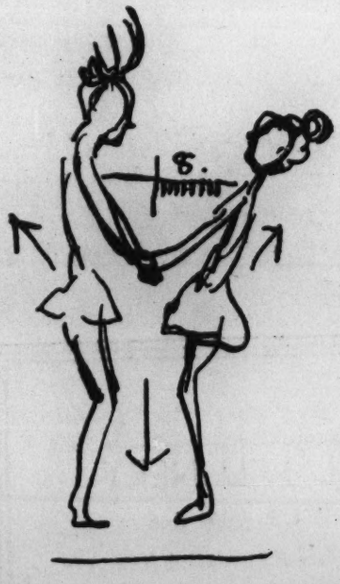

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NO. 1. WHAT—

They approach in rather fast motion. 6 frames for one step.

NO. 2. A—

They bend a little lower to prepare for the jump. 4 frames down.

NO. 3. PLEA—

Papagena is lifted up in 6 frames.

NO. 4.

The highest point is reached in 6 frames, arms and legs moving quickly.

NO. 5. SURE—

Moving down the figures come very close together, Papageno swinging her legs forward quickly, in 4 frames only.

NO. 6. THAT—

The figures now nearly overlap. This opportunity is taken to change the position of their bodies, so that they may continue in another direction. The movement here is very quick as to be in the next position soon, which is allowed to continue 4 frames.

NO. 7. WILL—

They have turned round. She glides more gently now to her new place. 7 frames.

NO. 8. BE.

They get into the position for the next step, separating a bit from each other.

NO. 9. INTERVAL OF EIGHT FRAMES.

The interval allows them to get into the right starting position for the next line. 8 frames.

point of view, to have the sound track made first, measure it carefully and only commence the film after this has been done.

The preliminary work for this is to make as many drawings as possible, to find out how many movements are needed for each bar and whether the figure can carry out these movements in that space of time. This is the most elaborate part of the preparations and often takes longer than the film itself.

To give a practical example, I have exactly illustrated how movement in a silhouette film is worked out. (See Text).

I have endeavoured to show here how *musical value* is transformed into *screen-space-value*. The movement in question comes from my *Papageno Film*, set to the music of Mozart's *Magic Flute*. It is the final duet between the lovers, happily united at the end. They dance and sing:

Welche Freude wird das sein
What a pleasure that will be

The measure of sound allows for so many frames each syllable: —

TEXT:	*What* /	*a* /	*plea* /	*sure* /	*that* /	*will* /	*be*
FRAMES:	6	4	12	4	7	4	8

with an interval of 8 frames at the end.

The arrows show the direction of the movement and the probable distance from one position to the other, for just that size of figure. This means 48 frames or the equivalent of two seconds in time. And so the whole action is worked out. As I have to avoid making mistakes during the photographing, this preliminary timing is highly necessary. To me this work is one of the most pleasant parts of the whole film. It is surprising how with each different score fresh problems of interpretation arise, and although I have ben engaged in this sort of work for a long time, each new film seems to me like a start again.

And this is perhaps good, for without it I certainly could not help feeling a certain amount of bitterness towards an industry that fails to appreciate the hard work put into the creation of a silhouette film,—after all an artistic achievement,—yet is always ready to squander money on things of little importance.

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Preliminary *still* taken by Irene Nicholson during preparation of the scenario for a film of Trinidad. Miss Hochoy—the Chinese lead.

ANDREW BUCHANAN, Editor of the Gaumont-British Magazine, President of the North London Film Society, Author of *Films, The Way of the Cinema; Film Propaganda* and now being prepared for press (Pitman's) *The Art of Film Production.* Also a frequent contributor to *Film Art.*

CZECHOSLAVAKIAN CINEMA

SVATOPLUK JEŽEK

Theoretically the advance guard cinema is proof that the silent film has not yet been, and will never be, discarded. Its fall was due not to artistic, but entirely to economic and social circumstances. That is why the advance guard awaits new directors who will return seriously to the silent film.

It would be absurd to pretend that the Czechoslovakian advance guard is one of the first in the world. It is not possible for us to have a systematic production of advance guard films, which, in other countries, are a sideline to the ordinary commercial cinema. Even so our advance guard, the outcome of individual creative initiative, has its own original style and compares favourably with that of other countries. It has frequently turned to abstract film, e.g. Jan Kucera's *Burlesque,** and *Light pierces Dark* by Vávra and Pilát. Naturally we did not achieve such results as those obtained, for example, by Moholy-Nagy abroad. This may have been because our abstract film stopped half way and did not reach complete abstraction. The sound film has now put an end to the " real film ", and we have never had anything to compare with the films of Fischinger. Alexandr Hackenschmied devoted himself to poetic documentary similar to Alberto Cavalcanti's *Rien que les heures* or Moholy-Nagy's *Marseille.* Even at this early stage such tendencies were visible as flowing rhythm, pictorial composition and use of light and shade.

Karel Plicka first obtained a great success with his documentary on the *Mountains and in the Valleys.* This film has not been shown to the general public, but only in intellectual circles. It earned well-deserved praise, however, at the 1st Venice Exhibition. It was a revelation. Perhaps he was right to guard it jealously for himself, because he hoped to exploit later on the scope which Slav folklore offered him. The opportunity arrived, and he developed this fragment into *The Earth Sings,* a symphonic poem with a background of simple peasant music. It could not have had a more appropriate title. It is a perfect picture of the optimism of the people.

The film was financed partly by the Matica Slovenska Organisation and partly by the President, T. G. Masaryk. It is a story told in picture and music, a fresco whose living figures have power to evoke emotional response. Karel Plicka has succeeded in expressing the life of the Slav people in its patriarchal form, embody-

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* A film of little action, but notable for its rhythmic continuity. The pure visual impression is emphasised by the music of Mirosla Ponc. — Ed.

ing ancient Slav traditions, a life independent of space and time, in harmony with nature. The picture is based on the contrast between the beauty and sadness of the country, a contrast made all the more poignant by the music of these people, who know how to express in song all their emotions except sorrow. Following after Josef Mánes, the genial painter of the nineteenth century, Plicka has discovered the inborn nobility of the Slav race.

The moral success of this film turned the attention of our producers toward the Slav subjects which lay waiting exploitation in cinema. The best proof that Slav, and " popular " elements in general, can bring the rebirth of the Czechoslovakian cinema are the films *Marysa* by Josef Rovensky, who made *Young Love* (which has been shown in England) and *Jánosik*, a story of the Robin Hood of Czechoslavakia, by Mac Fric.

Tomás Trnka's *Storm over Tatra* was inspired by the same feelings as *The Earth Sings*. This film illustrates the symphonic poem by Vitezslav Novák. It shows the magnificent scenery in Tatra and follows the method used for the first time by Eisenstein in *Romance Sentimentale*. It is a successful method which deserves to be copied.

Alexandr Hackenschmied, who helped Karel Plicka with the cutting of *The Earth Sings*, has himself made a film call *A Symphony of Architecture*.* It is a poetic composition centered round Hradcany, the ancient centre of the Czech dynasty and to-day the residence of the President of the Republic. Hackenschmied has avoided monotony by the use of subtle panoramas and bold angles. He does not try to tell a story of the life of the town. His idea is to perpetuate in a single moment the history of the architecture.

Another example is Jan Kucera's *Prague*, which is not, however, sufficiently consistent. It has been made from a purely documentary angle and with no artistic aim ; but the camera is inclined to rest too long on unimportant features. Otokar Vávra's new film, *We Live in Prague*, is inspired by a fundamentally different idea. His film is a blasphemous comment on the city.

Such are the films which portray the tendencies of the Czechoslavakian advance guard, whose predeliction for " popular " subjects has no parrallel except in Russia.

It must be borne in mind that the Czechoslavakian advance guard film is not a sound film in the proper sense of the word. Experimenting with sound is limited, and the possibilities of the silent film, whose promising development was so suddenly stopped, are far from being exhausted.

Translated from the French by IRENE NICHOLSON *and* BRYAN MONTAGU.

* This film is also known under its original title *Prague Castle*. In it the director tried to find the relationship between architectonic form and music. The illustration is by the composer Frantisek Bartos. — ED.

RELATIONS BETWEEN FILM AND BALLET

TERENCE WHITE*

The two arts, film and ballet, have similarities and differences both of which fit them for relationships artistically fascinating and vigorous. Some of these relationships imply the separateness of the two arts: we are here concerned, however, simply with those which lead to their collaboration.

Films and ballet can reinforce each other by duplication or by contrast. Which to use depends on the artist's understanding of psychological aesthetics: exactly how long a crescendo can continue without an especial emphasis on one of its points; when the chastity of precise parallelism must give way to a realisation of different "timbres", in order that both surprises and satisfaction may be maintained.

Consider the nature of these two arts. How will they combine? It is possible to have both stage-ballet and non-ballet-film proceeding at the same time. In this case the two paramount considerations are the greater brightness of the ballet and the greater nimbleness of the film.

It is possible also to use simultaneity of ballet and film to obtain special effects. For instance if it were desired to represent both the characters of the dancers and their inward states, a film projection could be used and could, by an inspired handling of the ideal element in grouping, even be regarded as a stage-property.

The idea, however, of taking ballet as representing an "external" world, and film (with its greater power of tinting and of confusedness) as symbolising the unconscious mind, is scarcely applicable throughout the whole of an action. It would probably be effctive if used (perhaps suddenly, perhaps, if gradually, more effectively) only in a small section. Nevertheless, there are certain religious subjects which, if characters were allowed to cross from one realm to another (this would demand a new technique of dimension in film) would benefit by the dualism.

Other methods than this, which is really nothing but a montage between the arts, will probably be found of greater general service. For instance: far-reaching additions to the store both of choreographic gesture and movement and of the audience's perception of their nuances, could be obtained by the following means:

1. The imposition of different photographs and lighting-processes on each other;
2. Their direct imposition on the actual choreography in progress.

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* Terence White was educated at St. Paul's School and attended the Royal College of Music. He practises four arts, *inter alia*. Besides the works mentioned in the article, he has written two ballets, *Science and Satan* and *Shine Open*, and the musical stage works *John All of Us* and *Restaurant*.

It will be useful now to consider another kind of combination between film and ballet. In my trilogy *Modern Action* (consisting of: *Highbrow Halt, To Be Commanded* and *Night*), orchestral music, song, poetry, prose, ballet, acting, décor and special lighting-effects, are used in the same way as the collaboration of instrumental timbres or pictorial tints. The arts are being orchestrated with and against each other: the media of different arts (two or three are always to be found functioning at any moment) are used according to the psychological needs of each moment in the work. For practical reasons film has been excluded from the first and last parts of this trilogy, but in the second it is employed—though an alternative method is also permitted—to flash on and off special effects or objects in the course of the normal dramatic and choreographic action.

The musical stage-work, *To Be Commanded,* is a short work based on one idea—the impact of war on life and civilisation; the whole action, beginning with a monologue in and on the pointless grey dull afternoon, moves towards the climax of the conscription of Evan, the young inventor and world-prophet. The sense of war coming is presented throughout the earlier action in many ways, one of which is our example: —

On the wall there hangs a picture of the Madonna; this changes from time to time to a picture of parading modern soldiers, in accordance with the inward thought-moods of the protagonist Gwen, who is Evan's wife.

Of course this example does not absolutely demand the process of film; but it could clearly be effected more satisfactorily by this means than by any other. And this transformation of the picture is related in several ways to the solo—and duet—ballet which occurs several times in the work. This relationship shows itself mainly in triad-form: as between films, music and ballet. That is to say, the emphases arranged mutually between film and ballet have usually to pass through the joining medium of music before the film-ballet accord becomes satisfactory. At certain points, however, this accord is direct; and here several methods of accord come into play.

The film effect can heighten the ballet-effect into a greater realisation of its own grace and line, or it can provide a complement of hardness, an actual contrast; or it can merely duplicate, in its own language, the process or artistic intention at work in the choreography. And similarly, the choreographic effects may act in these three ways on the film processes.

Another use for film in connection with choreographic stage-works, lies in the direction of architecture. In a collaboration of whole arts, " in the same way as instrumental timbres or pictorial tints collaborate ", architecture and ballet come together. But numerous obvious difficulties arise in this connection. Architecture

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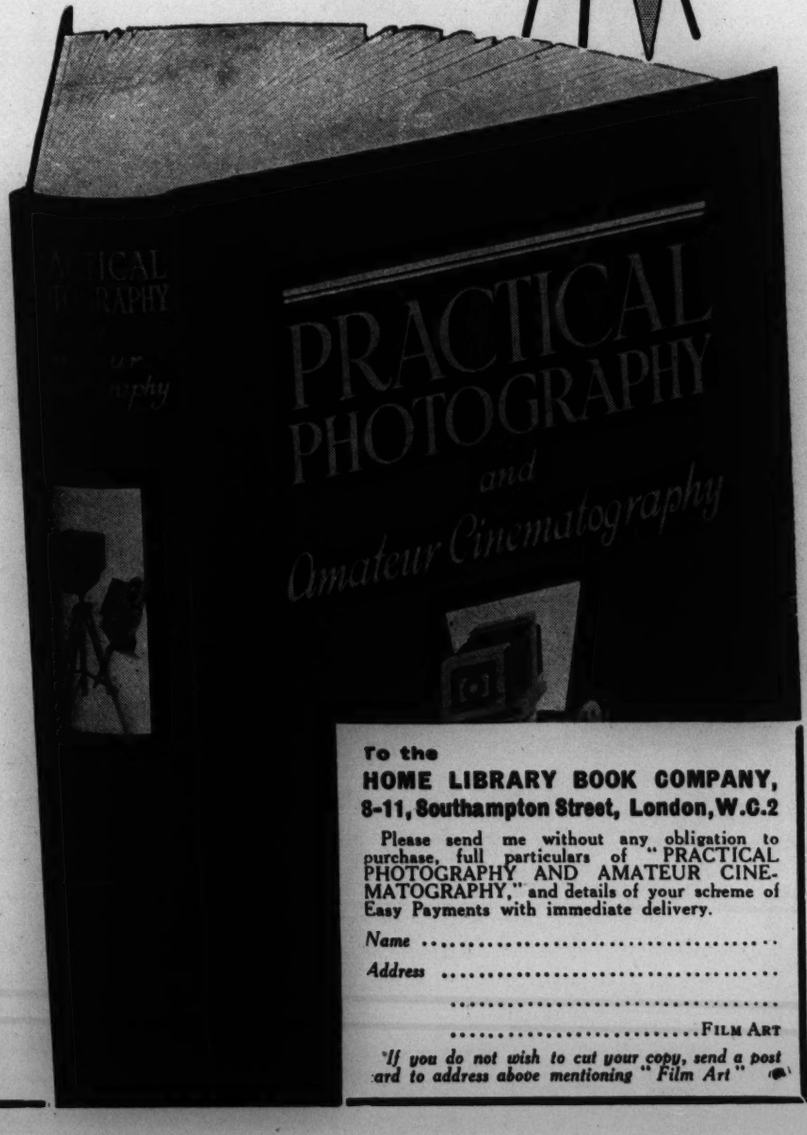

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COUNTERPLAN *by* Ermler and Utkevitch.
An example of natural acting material.

From Paul Rotha's book *Documentary Film.*

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is an art of space and dimension; its full revelation as a gradual building-up in accompaniment to dancing and music is, therefore, difficult and likely to give signs of ineffectual craving after effect.

It is precisely here that film can come in usefully; by its power of showing rapid successive sides of a view; also by its capacity for creating an illusion of dimension. In these ways it will be able to represent the growth of an architectural structure far less clumsily than a simple stage-mechanism could.

A ballet could be composed to represent the growth of ideas in Hegel's *Logic*, with an architectural development, constructed in film, at the back of the stage. As the Absolute was reached, perhaps a sheet-like effect, which would be impossible without film, could hide the dancers and convey the appropriate sense: a process which would be too obvious and awkward if performed by a white stage-curtain. (In this connection Mr. Fairthorne's article which dealt with the representation of mathematical processes in film, in FILM ART No. 6, may form a suggestive parallel).

Both in representing an architectural structural process, and in utilising all its individual characteristics, film has a salient part to play in any " drama " wherein the arts are orchestrated with and against each other.

• • •

MAN RAY VERSUS S JOHN WOODS

While the intellectual ramblings of Mr. Woods' article on Abstract Film do not warrant a reply, his prejudice and ignorance of Surrealism are sufficient provocation.

Light space movement and time are the elements we live in. We really do not know what they are, but we know they are not everything in life. And it is we who must agitate ourselves in these elements in order to get anywhere. Their control and modification by human beings are of interest only in a material and utilitarian sense. For lyricism, we must return to ourselves. The elements are a means to self exploitation. The water fish live in is not sufficient for their sustenance.

The inhuman mysticism of the Abstractionist, result of weak sensitiveness wounded by arkward contact with material conditions, has driven him into a blind alley. He is confronted with problems, experiments. Dreadful words, inevitable for scientists, and used by aesthetes to put off immediate realisation. Contraception is a problem; sterlisation is an experiment.

I affirm that I have never tried to invent anything and I have never made an experiment. The discoveries and the accidents of science have provided ample means for a lifetime of expression.

Although S John Woods quotes me correctly (having my

letter conveniently at his disposal before its publication), he proceeds immediately to transpose my words. I spoke of the nullity of Abstraction in itself, and not of the nullification of Abstraction by Surrealism.

For Surrealism *includes* Abstraction (Tanguy, Miro, Picasso), as did cubism, and as did some of the ancient arts. Abstraction is only a technique or means; in itself a bloodless skeleton.

Too cowardly, or too frigid to indorse the dialectic materialism of Cubism and of Surrealism, the Abstractionist has isolated one of the many mediums of these powerful manifestations, as a lion is put into a cage, to serve as a spectacle to the thrill-loving but fearful aesthete when he ventures out of his ivory tower.

Here, indeed, you have the ear-marks of the "unsatisfied ego of bourgeoise decrepitude". S John Woods first use of these words is completely self-revealing. MAN RAY: Paris Spring 1936.

———————

Mr. Man Ray says: " My prejudice and ignorance of Surrealism are sufficient provocation for a reply ". He proceeds to attack Abstract Art and myself. To my charges against Surrealism he pays no attention. Let me recapitulate them: —

1) Surrealism is a means of escape from actuality by way of fantasy,
2) Fantasy in one form or another has always been necessary to compensate for the world's deficiencies,
3) Such fantasy, including Surrealism, is not constructive. It runs away from circumstances instead of grasping them,
4) Progress is made not by *escapism,* but by a constructive driving force,
5) This driving force is, at the present time, manifested in the Abstract Painting and Sculpture and not in Surrealism. *

Mr. Man Ray does not attempt to deal with these points, which apparently shows " My prejudice and ignorance of Surrealism ". His discursive letter is so crammed with vague illusions and metaphors, that I honestly am often unable to see what he is driving at. What does Mr. Man Ray mean by " The inhuman mysticism of the Abstractionist "? If the Abstractionist is " confronted with problems, experiments ", what is the point of Mr. Ray's distinction between them per contraception and sterilisation? What *is* Mr. Ray trying to say in paragraphs 3 and 4? What, lastly, is " The dialectical materialism of Cubism and Surrealism "?

Abstract Art descended *directly* from Cubism: Surrealism is a completely separate movement, existent before Cubism, and unaffected by it. The only relation between Picasso's recent Surrealist work and his Cubist work is that both are by the greatest artist alive—in fact Surrealism is a complete denial of the fundamental principles of Cubism; Abstract Art an extension of these principles.

My original charges against Surrealism are still unanswered . . .

S JOHN WOODS : London Spring 1936.

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* See FILM ART No. 7, page 16.

FILMS OF THE QUARTER

"I am vastly pleased with the rapid progress FILM ART *is making. Best wishes for its continued and deserved success!"*

HERMAN G. WEINBERG, The Baltimore Critic.

JOHN C. MOORE DISCUSSES DIE EWIGE MASKE

One cannot criticise this film by ordinary standards, for it is a *Tendenz-film,* i.e., a film propagating certain opinions. In part it deals with the subconscious mind.

Die Ewige Maske is a vitally important achievement, firstly for its sociological tendencies and secondly for its artistic development. Its greatest asset is its deep-rooted sincerity.

Within the limitations of the modern cinema, having, on the one hand, to consider the professional student of medicine and on the other hand the layman, Werner Hochbaum, the director, has successfully succeeded in presenting his case, without trying the susceptibilities of either side too severely.

There is no other medium quite as suitable for portraying the subconscious mind as the cinema, a fact of which both producers and medical profession are aware. The manner in which it is presented on the screen is bound to evoke a good deal of criticism. Even as great a director as Pabst failed comparatively to bring to life the Freudian theories in *Secrets of a Soul.*

The sincerity of *Die Ewige Maske* brings out the shallowness of that other hospital film *Men in White.* Setting aside the problem of Dr. Dumartin's "divided personality" and subconscious reactions, the film is a struggle between the old and the new régime in hospital life, and brings out the under-current of hostility between the two generations well. Dr. Dumartin and Dr. Wendt, two brilliant young doctors at a Basle hospital, pit their youthful learning against the more mature knowledge of Professor Tscherko. Dr. Dumartin, without permission, experiments with his new serum on a serious case of meningitis. The patient, a hopeless case, dies.

The accusations of the patient's wife, the failure of the experiment and an attempted suicide from which he is saved, bring about a "divided personality": Dr. Dumartin is looking for himself.

It is here that the director—to my mind quite successfully—has attempted to portray the Doctor's deranged state of mind. Some of his ideas are of particular interest:—

One of the last shots of Dr. Dumartin, before attempting suicide, was in a second-rate cabaret, with a chorus dancing on the stage. In the dream sequence these dancers appear again, but this time as ballet dancers. Then, in the hospital, we have the scene of Dr. Dumartin walking along the passage, with doors opening left and right. In his subconscious mind doors continue to open. I believe that even the *Life Machine,* reminiscent of Fritz Lang's *Moloch* in *Metropolis,* which in a final fury of fright he smashes to pieces to escape, is justified.

The acting, especially that of Mathias Wieman, is of a high standard, and is fascinating in its total absence of mannerism.

The film should appeal to all interested in cinema art. That *Die Ewige Maske* is not without medical interest, is proved by the lecture held by Dr. med. und. phil. Gauger at the Lessinghochschule in Berlin on the subject.

Presented by: The Film Society. *Production*: Progress Film, Vienna.
Direction: Werner Hochbaum. *Camera*: Oscar Schnirch.
Art Direction: Hans Jakoby. *Masks*: Peter Dannenberg.
With: Mathias Wieman, Olga Tschechowa, Peter Petersen and Tom Kraa.

ROBERT FAIRTHORNE DISCUSSES SHAPE OF THINGS TO COME

It is ungrateful to speak ill of any attempts at fantasy. However fantasy needs imagination and a film of the future demands realism. This film is a total failure on the first count and a partial failure on the second. The organisation and mechanism of the production has overwhelmed the director and the remains are flooded by endless dialogue that, however suitable, on the printed page, is intolerably tedious on the screen. The characters cannot even come down in parachutes without sermonising.

The sequence that had a better chance of moving the audience than another, was that bridging the world of to-day with the ruined world of the near future. This was spoiled by complete unreality ; multiple printing of tanks and soldiers on top of each other like a badly designed poster. The very lettering of the continuity titles—carved in relief and none too legible—was more solid than the scenes in which it was inserted. The horrors of war would have been better brought out by straightforward scenes of soldiers tramping about an ordinary bedroom to set up a machine gun, or ordinary citizens evacuating an ordinary house with their intimate possessions. Cardboard cities in flames and comic tanks cannot connect with individual experience.

The three photographers responsible for the special work show great skill, but it is ruined by the falacy of the direction. This appears to be based on the principal that if three pigs under a gate make more noise than one, then a thousand incomprehensible wheels and whangbars are artistically more effective than one.

The film suffers also from drastic cutting in order to fit it into the programme. It is extraordinary that producers could not find out the length of a normal programme before they started.

Production: London Films. *Photography*: Georges Perinal.
Direction: Wm. Cameron Menzies. *Special Effects*: Edward Cohen, A.S.C.
With: Raymond Massey, Cedric Hardwicke, Ralph Richardson, Margaretta Scott, Ann Todd and Pearl Argyle.

JOHN C. MOORE DISCUSSES MARCHAND D'AMOUR

This is the second film by Edmond T. Greville, the director of *Remous,* to be shown in this country.

Marchand d'Amour can hardly be criticised as a whole and should not be taken too seriously as a film ; but it gives the director ample scope to show flashes of imaginative direction. One can have only admiration for Mr. Greville who takes a cheap novelette film and almost succeeds in turning it into a worthwhile film. Perhaps one of the most gifted men in the industry, he treats his camera as a toy. There is nothing *copy-book* about his direction. His approaches are often faulty and his angles sometimes irresponsibly chosen, but they are always effective. His timing, however, is excellent and he never prolongs a scene unnecessarily. The final product is essentially cinema and he is fully aware of the possibilities of his medium. His mind works in terms of film pictures.

Under his great verbosity lies hidden a great talent—with a tendency towards the neurotic. He will probably develop along the lines Fritz Lang did, and many a director has done worse.

Jean Galland has a good part as the caricature film director and Rosine Dérean (not unlike Danielle Darrieux) makes an attractive star. They are both creations of the director.

Presented by: London Film Society. *Scenario*: Edmond T. Greville.
Direction: Edmond T. Greville. *Decors*: Pierre Schild.
With: Jean Galand, Rosine Dérean and Françoise Rosay.

HERMAN G. WEINBERG DISCUSSES THE NEW YORK PREMIERE OF MODERN TIMES

By far the high spot of the winter season in the American cinema has been the long and eagerly awaited Chaplin film, *Modern Times*. A satirical comedy, derived in part from two René Clair films (*A Nous la Liberté* and *Le Million*—the conveyor-belt sequence and impromptu football game with the roast duck) it is touched with the divine afflatus that has marked Chaplin as an artist apart from all others working in films. The film is gargantuanly hilarious, Chaplin's most consistently funny opus, bar none. The sequence with the automatic feeding machine is the high spot for panto-mimic humour so far as mass audience reaction is concerned. The night I saw the film, the audience went into a paroxysm of laughter from which it could not be stopped and the laughter rippled along, intermittently, for minutes after that sequence was done.

The radical press has been quick to find implications in *Modern Times*, and rightly so, despite Chaplin's good-natured denials that he meant anything of the sort. The man is simply too intelligent to attack a theme of such terrible reality—our modern industrial age, factories, unemployment, strikes, police vs. workers, etc.—and dissipate it into mere meaningless gags. *Modern Times* is not only a fine comedy, it is an important socio-logical film. The fact that its humour derives from this poignant material does not lessen its value as a social tract one iota. Voltaire and Swift could laugh while pointing a mocking finger at the follies of the world. That laughter has not yet stopped echoing around the world.

Production, Direction, Illustration: Charles Chaplin.
With: Charles Chaplin, Paulette Goddard, Chester Conklin.

JOHN C. MOORE DISCUSSES AMOK

This film is adapted from the story by Stefan Zweig, and carries with it great possibilities. These have been partly wasted and ignored. Fjodor Otzep, the director, has a flair for the meretricious. At best he does not rank amongst the leading directors, but his methods are worth studying. He has assimilated the ideas—bad and good—of three countries: Russia, Germany and France. His flowery style is reminiscent of von Sternberg.

Amok is sheer, undiluted tripe, but contains a certain measure of interest. The laboured efforts of Otzep to establish atmosphere in the opening sequence are tiresome, but there is some good cross-cutting to grinning masks, when two men play poker all night—but this again is overdone. The absence of speech in the first few minutes is the film's best quality. Had Otzep been satisfied with a few good shots, the opening sequence would have been perfect. But he spoiled it by laying it on with a trowel.

With the entrance of the heroine, the story became slightly ridiculous. The theme is a case of abortion, with the doctor refusing to perform an illegal operation. An interesting scene is the one where she presents her case : She walks alongside the bookcase in the study, fingering the books and opening them aimlessly, then putting them back again. The doctor raps out questions. Answers: Oui, non; Oui, non—elusive. The woman fingering the books; rather lovingly; more of a caress. An interesting study this.

But otherwise rather a waste of celluloid.

Presented by: North London Film Society.
Production: Pathé-Natan.
Direction: Fjodor Otzep.
Camera: Curt Courant.
Montage: Han Rust.
Design: Meerson.

NANCY CUNARD DISCUSSES UN MONDE QUI SE MEURT

A somewhat thin documentary on southern Mexico and the centre of Guatemala, with some interesting ethnic shots of the Chammonaca and Lacamdon tribes, the derelict descendants of Maya civilisation, and one good, all too short scene of the white man's cast-off frock-coats incorporated by the Indians into their sunset dance ritual. Jungle-orchids and virgin forest, cactus-land and deserts, the dispirited Mongoloid faces of these extremely poor people—material for a far profounder ethnical film, an analysis of the forces and events which have brought the indigenous man here to lowest ebb.

Presented by: The Ciné Club de la Femme, Paris.
Direction: Bernard de Colmont. *Illustration*: Jean Wiener.

MONTAGU O. COATES DISCUSSES MEN AND JOBS

Men and Jobs deals with the construction of a portion of what is, apparently, the Dnieper dam.

The advent of an American engineer brings home to the leader of the shock brigade, fresh from the congratulations of his fellow-workers, that he is in reality not such an efficient unit as he believed. The section in charge of the American progresses at far greater speed than that of the shock-brigade, until a class in elementary engineering is formed in the railway van in which they travel to work. The result eventually exceeds all that has been done before, with promises of even greater things ahead.

The direction is lively throughout, leavened with a gentle humour uncommon in the Soviet film. Machinery and actors are effectively handled, and the striving for efficiency, if at times a little pathetic, is drawn with a pleasant balance between propaganda and entertainment.

Presented by: North London Film Society. *Direction*: Macharet.
Production: Soyuzkino. *Sound Composer*: Popov.

NANCY CUNARD DISCUSSES TARASS BOULBA

Despite the excellent, clear photography, a somewhat heavily handled picture, good and bad alternating throughout. Baur seems better suited in *Crime and Punishment* and *The Polish Jew* than as swashbuckling, brave, bold Cossack-leading Ataman Tarass. But Baur's honesty in acting is unquestionable, and such parts as *are* scenes and not dust-raising sequences and unconvincing castledom, are real enough. Tarass directing a letter of protest to the Sultan; Tarass preparing to besiege the Polish castle: "You have forbidden us Cossacks vodka even at our wedding feasts; now we shall starve you"; Tarass shooting his traitor son; Tarass wounded to death, dying with his great pipe in his mouth, resuscitating for an instant to give his Cossacks the last order: "March on!"

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Adaptation: Pierre Benoit from Gogol. *Direction*: Alexis Granowsky.
With: Harry Baur and Danielle Darrieux.

MONTAGU O. COATES DISCUSSES NIGHT MAIL

Whatever may be the failings of the G.P.O. Film Unit, its production seldom lacks competence, and this is fully borne out in *Night Mail*. The journey of the *Postal Special* from Euston to Aberdeen provides excellent opportunities for effective, if, at times, heavily filtered camera work, and straightforward direction, when dealing with the workers in the train and those whose interests are centred in its journey.

Verses by W. H. Auden and music by B. Britten are excellently linked with the rhythm of the train as it crosses the Border—an effect worthy of future exploration, but not without its dangers. It is a refreshing film, produced in a workmanlike manner.

Production: G.P.O. Films.
Direction: Basil Wright and Harry Watt.
Sound: Alberto Cavalcanti.
Verse: W. H. Auden.

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FILM INDEX

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ROGER SMITHELLS, Editor of *Decoration.*

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NANCY CUNARD DISCUSSES UN MONDE QUI SE MEURT

A somewhat thin documentary on southern Mexico and the centre of Guatemala, with some interesting ethnic shots of the Chammonaca and Lacamdon tribes, the derelict descendants of Maya civilisation, and one good, all too short scene of the white man's cast-off frock-coats incorporated by the Indians into their sunset dance ritual. Jungle-orchids and virgin forest, cactus-land and deserts, the dispirited Mongoloid faces of these extremely poor people—material for a far profounder ethnical film, an analysis of the forces and events which have brought the indigenous man here to lowest ebb.

Presented by: The Ciné Club de la Femme, Paris.
Direction: Bernard de Colmont. *Illustration*: Jean Wiener.

MONTAGU O. COATES DISCUSSES MEN AND JOBS

Men and Jobs deals with the construction of a portion of what is, apparently, the Dnieper dam.

The advent of an American engineer brings home to the leader of the shock brigade, fresh from the congratulations of his fellow-workers, that he is in reality not such an efficient unit as he believed. The section in charge of the American progresses at far greater speed than that of the shock-brigade, until a class in elementary engineering is formed in the railway van in which they travel to work. The result eventually exceeds all that has been done before, with promises of even greater things ahead.

The direction is lively throughout, leavened with a gentle humour uncommon in the Soviet film. Machinery and actors are effectively handled, and the striving for efficiency, if at times a little pathetic, is drawn with a pleasant balance between propaganda and entertainment.

Presented by: North London Film Society. *Direction*: Macharet.
Production: Soyuzkino. *Sound Composer*: Popov.

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L'EPERVIER, is a film by Marcel l'Herbier, once the mainstay of the French *avant-garde*. Like Lang he has sold his soul to sensationalism and international graft and wastes his time creating synthetic atmosphere. Handsome Charles Boyer and even more handsome Pierre Richard Willm take the leads.

TRAUMULUS is a new Carl Frölich film, featuring Emil Jannings. Excellent direction has kept the great German actor in his place, and his sober performance makes to help us forget his recent failures.

Thank you, Mr. Frölich.

DER HOEHERE BEFEHL, the Gerhardt Lamprecht film, mainly lacks originality and rhythm, but Carl Ludwig Diehl is good as the hero.

HOHE SCHULE, under the direction of Erich Engels, deserves more credit than it has received and can be considered one of the best Continental productions of recent months. The atmosphere of the circus is beautifully portrayed, and Rudolf Forster is provided with an excellent part, capably supported by Hans Moser.

VEILLE D'ARMES, another film of Marcel l'Herbier, is good entertainment, but hardly more. The star is Annabella, but the acting honours go to Victor Francen. The director, as usual, has little interest in human values, but the battle-cruiser compensates him for the loss of rushing trains.

MAZURKA, the Willi Forst film with Pola Negri, would be a great commercial success if brought to London. It contains all the ingredients of a successful picture, and is—within limits—well acted and directed. Pola does good work in a melodramatic role, and Ingeborg Theek is a young actress worth watching.

DIE LEUCHTER DER KAISERIN, by Karl Hartl, will have had its London première by the time this number is published. The director has a sense of the filmic and is a clever craftsman. Werner Brandes handles the camera and brings out the exquisite beauty of Sibylle Schmitz. Carl Ludwig Diehl takes the male lead.

DIE LETZEN VIER VON SANTA CRUZ, is the film debut of Werner Klingler, The direction, at times, is theatrical. Walter Gronostay, who illustrated *Friesennot*, is responsible for the musical score.

Cast: Françoise Rosay, Inkijinoff and Erich Ponto.

THE BIRTH OF A ROBOT, by Len Lye and Humphrey Jennings is one of the best examples of colour animation for advertising purposes to date. It puts the art in advertising. The Gaspar-colour and the camera-work of Alex. Strasser are excellent throughout. The fantasy is set to the music of Gustav Holst's *Planets Suite*. One is inclined to wonder whether it was intentional that the theme song of the oil and petrol robot should be *Mars*. The directors were correct in using 8 frame animation for the robot—puppets should not move smoothly.

Shell-Mex and B.P. should be congratulated on their good taste in leaving the artists a free hand.

LA VIE EST A NOUS is a French film just finished in Paris. Made under the auspices of the French Communist Party the picture deals with events in the Fascist riots of 1934, the struggles and aspiration of working-class youth and the right to strike for better living conditions. As yet there have been only private showings, the French Government having forbidden the general release—on technically illegal grounds, be it added.

HOLLYWOOD STAR ! *An abstract photography by* OSWELL BLAKESTON.

"Hollywood Star!" When we speak of the magic of cinema, we would do well to remember that what we really mean is often the theosophy-jargon of cinéphiles. Very well, Glamour! We have tried to show it here in *astral shapes*, hovering over the hypnotised automaton of Hollywood. It is interesting to remember how careful cameramen are to keep the lights out of their shots. Quite remarkable effects can be obtained by including them—see, for a beginning, some of the ballet snapshots taken from the wings shooting into an opposite bank of lights. This has been a favourite. Film-musicals and film-glamour merchants and those for whom reality is not the first count, please note. O.B.

PHOTOGRAPHY

CASSON

5 JOUBERT STUDIOS, JUBILEE PLACE, LONDON, S.W.3.

Telephone: Flaxman 8421.

BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS
OF THE QUARTER

"*I wish* FILM ART *a great success.*"
JOHN B. MYERS, London Film Productions Ltd.

"DOCUMENTARY FILM," *by* Paul Rotha (*Faber & Faber,* 12s. 6d.)

Speaking to Basil Wright about this book, he said: "To have the courage to write about *Documentary* is an achievement in itself"

This book comes at a most opportune moment, when the Documentary Movement —one of the most important phases in the cinema—is slowly gaining recognition, and should do much to clarify the position. It is written in plain English, a wholesome change after the filmic jargon of most of its predecessors, and there is no reason why the man in the street should not be able to follow the author's arguments.

By his qualifications Mr. Rotha is exceptionally well suited to deal with the subject, and there are few who could have done it so completely. He has covered his ground well and prepared every detail minutely. There is no irrelevant material, and by excellent division and sub-division he skilfully leads up to the point. Mr. Rotha has divided his book into four groups: 1) INTRODUCTION TO THE CINEMA, 2) THE EVOLUTION OF DOCUMENTARY, 3) THE PRINCIPLES OF DOCUMENTARY and 4) DOCUMENTARY IN THE MAKING. Lack of space does not allow us to discuss each section at length, but we would draw the attention of our readers to *The Economic Basis and Commercial Development of the Film in No.* 1, *The Three Traditions* (*Naturalist, Realist and Newsreel*) in No. 2, and *The Function of the Producer and Director* in No. 4. The last section is the most important of the book for it confines itself solely to the making of Documentary Films, and by a careful analysis the reader is fully acquainted with the various stages of production.

The book succeeds where others have failed: To present the Documentary Film as an interesting and vitally alive branch of cinema production; a cause furthered by a body of young men whose interests are much wider than film alone and are practically authorities on all the arts to-day.

Although we have not always seen eye to eye with John Grierson and his young men—they are so self-satisfied and smug at times—he deserves full credit for establishing the Documentary Film and making it the most important factor in the British cinema to-day.

The aesthetes will succeed in finding fault with Mr. Rotha's book, but this should not worry the author unduly. They will always find fault. No Film Society should be without it, and no student of the cinema—if he can possibly afford it. The book contains 64 illustrations of a very high quality and there is an excellent preface by John Grierson.

"FILM PRODUCTION" *by* Adrian Brunel (*Geo. Newnes,* 7s. 6d.)

To their *Filmcraft series,* consisting of *Filmcraft* (Brunel), *Film Technique* (Pudovkin), *Making Home Movies* (Ottley) and *Film Titling* (Kendal), Messrs. Newnes have added a further book by Adrian Brunel.

Mr. Brunel is a director who has gained his experience in the commercial cinema. He has been obliged to work to time schedules and within financial limits, two very essential factors in film production. This makes his chapters dealing with cost and set economy two of the most interesting of the book. As a typical example of set economy, the late Paul Leni's *Waxworks* is quoted, and Mr. Brunel points out how

advisable it is that the director should also have more than a perfunctory knowledge of art direction.

In his chapter on costing, the author touches on the essential difference between American and European productions. Whereas the English and Continental studios have to practice economy, the Americans love expensive sets—they believe it gives a sense of movement. They forget, however, that big expenditure is not always the criterion of quality.

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CORRESPONDENCE

Owing to lack of space we are only able, on this occasion, to include one letter. However, we are always interested to have suggestions from our readers.

The Editors,

I have just discovered FILM ART with a warm glow of appreciative delight. It is exactly the magazine I have wanted and waited for. In general I like its free, international tone. In particular I was much interested in the informal scenario *Escape*. This set me thinking how stimulating it would be if you could publish some actual scenarios of important films, either in their original forms as complete shooting scripts (translated, of course, when necessary) or revised to resemble the one I have jut mentioned. How fascinating, for instance and how illuminating it would be to be able to study and keep for future reference scenarios of the best German period—the scripts of such films as *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari, The Last Laugh, Warning Shadows, The Student of Prague, The Love of Jeanne Ney,* etc., either in their entirety, serially or in a condensed form. Also non-fictional film such as Walter Ruttmann's *Berlin.* (Incidentally I have procured a back number of FILM ART in order to read the review of his *Little Film of a Big City* when I saw it mentioned in No. 7.)

I wonder if any of the above scenarios have been published in book form.

If my suggestion is quite impracticable, would it not be possible for the scenarists of these distinguished films and others of a like calibre to write small, original scenarios for your periodical ?

With appreciative good wishes,

DOROTHY ROWLAND, *Richmond.*

In view of their length, ordinary scenarios are often difficult to publish, unless in serial form, which is not suitable to a quarterly. Frank Jackson, one of the younger members of Kino Group, has written an amateur scenario, especially for FILM ART, entitled *A Portrait of John Keats* which we hope to print shortly. We shall also publish extracts from the script of the film on which Miss Nicholson is at present working in Trinidad.

ED.

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ANSWER TO CORRESPONDENCE

Mr. William Wilson-Dickson's letter has proved a helpful amplification of the few brief definitions contained in No. 6.

It is not certain what is meant by the following: " *Editing* . . . includes, besides the *arranging* of complete shots, the shaping of the actual shots themselves from the raw material by eliminating the unwanted parts." If by " shaping from the raw material " is meant composing within the set frame, then this process can hardly be included as a part of the *editing.* It is rather a preliminary composition. If, however, Mr. Wilson-Dickson meant the cutting off of unwanted parts from the already photographed film

strip, then the process is certainly a part of the *editing*. Emphasis was purposely removed from it in our definition, however, because otherwise a negative construction would be implied, a whittling away rather than a building up. If the editing is clearly set out in the shooting-script (and this should be done as exactly as possible) then the unwanted parts of the film strip can be regarded as such from the very first and in the very act of photographing them, which is then a process simply of *safety first.* A sequence of shots is a unified pictorial composition which should contain no suspicion of the eliminated material, any more than a painting should be self-conscious about its missing colours. Emphasis on " cutting away," therefore, might tend to a false method of approach, showing itself in jerkiness and general lack of " flow."

The definition of *montage* contained in No. 6 seems to apply to both moving and static arrangement of *shots* or *stills*. But the third sense which Mr. Wilson-Dickson suggests, " the relative movements of parts of one scene," is not a part of *montage* itself. It is merely the extension in time of what, in a still photograph, is static composition. The technical terms, whose definitions are easy to fix, are to be found in most technical books. Raymond Spottiswoode also gives those of most importance in his *Grammar of the Film.* The aesthetic terms are bound to be loose and more difficult to apply. There are very few of them, for the film is still, as Leonard Hacker has pointed out, only an illustration of other arts. It has not found its real content. As it discovers itself new terms will arise, and there we shall attempt to clarify, but certainly not to fix.

ED.

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HERMAN G. WEINBERG INTERVIEWS ROMAN FREULICH

A series of shorts showing negro life in America is being made by Roman Freulich in association with Edward Spitz, and Clarence Muse, the negro actor and singer.

FILM ART, No. 7.

In discussing the subject the director said:—

" The Negro in America presents a very dramatic situation. Brought here by force, he became enslaved by the White race, up to the Civil War by outright ownership, and at present by Jim Crowism, lynching, share-cropping and general economic peonage. In spite of these plights, Negroes have risen to great heights in scientific fields and the arts. To the makers of films in Hollywood, the Negro race does not exist, except as an inferior race, ignorant, uncouth, speaking a peculiar jargon. A race that is very useful as " comedy relief." Upon the screen, a Negro is never taken seriously. He is usually a boot-black, porter or loafer, whose stupidity is bound to provoke laughter. To me, the Negro race presented a rich vein of cinematic material. Here is a race with a tragic background, though primitive and elemental, rich especially in folk-lore and music. The Negro, through his peculiar position, is different, yet, like Shylock, " he has eyes, hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions, etc."……

" In the series which I am planning, I shall present the Negro as a human being who laughs, sings and cries. This will be no caricature, but a true presentation."

COMMENT

Montagu O. Coates, our new London Correspondent, is Editor of the Magazine of the Croydon Gas Company and a member of the Council of the Croydon Film Society. He has made two films: *Winter Wind* and *Distribution of Gas,* the latter for the Croydon Gas Company. At present he is at work on a film of the construction of a reinforced concrete grain silo for Messrs. E. R. & F. Turner Ltd. of Ipswich.

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Messrs.. Duncan Miller Ltd. recently held an exhibition of Abstract Art in contemporary, the settings being arranged by S John Woods and Duncan Miller. Paintings by John Piper (who will do the colour drawings in our next number) Moholy-Nagy, together with works by Helion, Hepworth, Mondrian and Nicholson were on view.

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Denis Johnston, author of *The Moon in the Yellow River,* who wrote on *The Last Refuge of Nationality* in FILM ART No. 6, came to London with the Dublin Gate Theatre Company, brought over by the Earl of Longford, and played the part of the young Tartar in the Chinese fantasy *The Armlet of Jade.*

— — —

The 1935/6 season of the Film Societies has come to an end and we thank the organisers for the work they have done on behalf of FILM ART. We shall be glad if they will let us have particulars of their policy and programme as soon as the new season commences.

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Of special interest to those who deplore the falsifications and bad aesthetics of the general commercial picture will be the recent creation in Paris of "*Ciné-Liberté.*" Its technicians, professional screen actors, and public, will collaborate in the making and showing of new work untrammelled by capitalist-commercial influence. Documentaries and film-chronicles of contemporary events will be made, which will not be inspired by an official or trade point of view. The organisation will campaign against the imbecile strictures of French censorship, and will show film work that has been banned in the past, such as that of Jean Vigo, to mention only one name. A "free tribune" of discussion is envisaged in the form of a regular bulletin. Those interested please get in touch immediately with: Ciné-Liberté, Maison de la Culture, 12 Rue de Navarin, Paris, 9e.

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The Ciné Club de Paris presents new, censored and silent films, films of diverse political trends. Its directors, Jacques Aubin and B. Fainsilber have lately shown Raizman's *La Terre a Soif* (a very good Soviet documentary on Turkmenistan), Oswald's *Le Capitaine de Köpenick* (a German film), and Feyder's *Thérèse Raquin.* The club has a show every Tuesday night.

Jacques Aubin is anxious to get in touch with FILM ART and its readers. His address is: Ciné Club de Paris, 7 Faubourg Poissonnière.

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Ciné Club de la Femme is run by Lucie Derain. Amongst its coming showings are *Le Chant de la Fleur Rouge,* a new Swedish film of Per Axel-Branner, and *Le Festival de Salzbourg,* a film musical.

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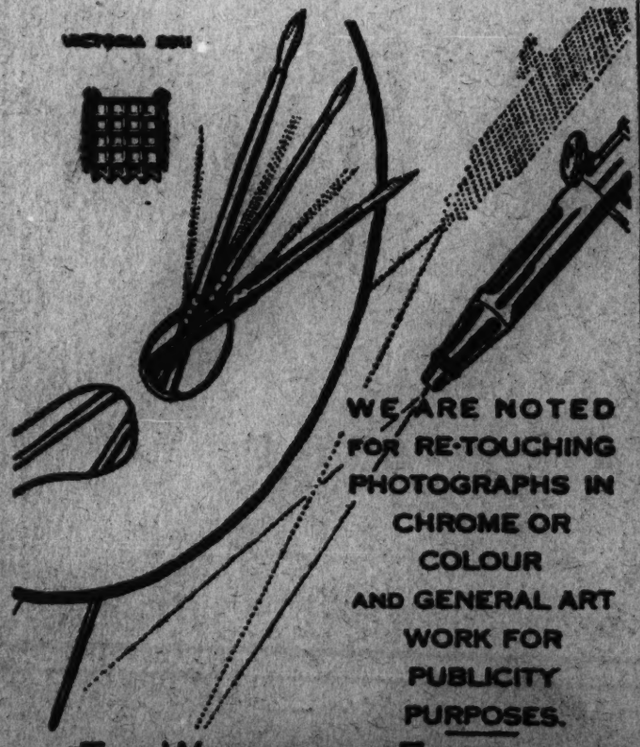

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